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Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

Vol. 8, No. 9

September, 1989

Successful Recycling Markets

Although we hear from local recycling programs about their problems marketing recovered materials, the success stories are rarely reported. The "newspaper glut" and "scrap metal crisis" have been highly publicized. On the market front, all is not doom and gloom. All commodity market prices fluctuate with supply and demand. Color separated glass, high grade paper, and precious scrap metal are readily marketable and will remain so for economic reasons of the respective industries. Low grade paper and ferrous metal are the more difficult recovered materials to market from a long-term market stability perspective; however, the outlook for these materials is improving.

Old Newspaper (ONP)

The State engaged a Boston based consulting firm, Mount Auburn Associates, to look into Connecticut industry's present and projected newspaper use. Mt. Auburn found that four paperboard manufacturers in Connecticut will use approximately 84,000 tons of old newspaper this year, a 30% increase over last year. Expansion in these industries could result in another 30% increase in use of old newspaper by Connecticut manufacturers. The availability and decreased price for old newspaper clearly has stimulated the Connecticut market to grow.

Various corporations are studying the feasibility of constructing new mills to make newsprint from old newspapers and retrofitting existing mills to use old newspaper. A number of corporations have recognized that the northeast market is ripe for building a new world class newsprint mill using old newspapers and are studying the feasibility of such a mill. A standard world-class mill making a 50/50 blend (i.e., half virgin pulp and half old newspaper) newsprint would consume 150,000 or more tons of old newspaper and require a \$500 million investment. An investment of this scale will only be made if old newspaper supply can be guaranteed and newspaper publishers buy the resulting product. Other uses for old newspapers are also being explored, including tissue products, cellulose insulation, hydro-seeding, animal bedding, and packing material.

Scrap Metal

While low prices and increased supply have stimulated the old newspaper market, ferrous scrap markets rose with the U.S. steel markets and increased exporting. Last year municipalities were having great difficulty trying to rid the streets of junk cars. Now wreckers are taking junk cars at no cost in many Connecticut towns, including New Britain, Enfield, Windsor Locks, and East Windsor. With adequate preparation and processing, de-tinners and steel mills are buying steel can scrap. A major de-tinner has indicated a willingness to sign 20 year contracts with Connecticut steel can scrap processors, but a major constraint for de-tinners is lack of availability of recovered steel cans.

The DEP and Department of Economic Development are continuing to work with Mt. Auburn Associates to define market forces and the most effective ways to stimulate markets for recovered materials. Our findings indicate markets exist and will continue to exist for economic reasons. Recovered material markets must be evaluated by specific material type because each commodity market reflects different industrial factors and trends. Municipalities are encouraged to work together to develop recycling programs that generate large quantities of high quality materials. All indications are that adequately processed recovered materials in large quantities are and will be marketable.

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Update on DEP White Paper Recycling Program

The pilot office paper recycling program implemented on February 1, 1989, by the central Hartford offices of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) involves the participation of approximately 720 employees who source separate white office paper (white windowless envelopes, white letterhead, white typing-photocopy paper, interoffice memos, white and green bar computer paper, white pad paper, etc.) using imprinted corrugated desk top containers.

As of July 31, 1989 DEP and DAS have recycled 24.35 tons of white office paper (which amounts to 0.55 lbs/employee/day). Recycling containers were provided by the contractor, who also pays the state \$40/ton for the paper. There have been no problems with contamination. During the first six months of the program's operation, \$973.20 in revenues have been generated and \$712.41 of trash tipping fee costs have been avoided, for a total benefit of \$1,685.61 to the state. White office paper, and not mixed office paper, was chosen as the target grade of paper to recycle due to its relative market stability and desirability in contrast to mixed paper.

Washington Lawyers Cling to Yellow Pads

According to a recent Associated Press article, the army of high-priced lawyers in our nation's capitol (roughly one for every 22 residents), received a request to stop using yellow legal pads with mixed reviews. A sweeping new recycling law taking effect on October 1 in part discourages local office workers from producing colored paper trash which many recycling firms don't want. While the yellow legal pads are suffering a decline in popularity among younger lawyers who prefer to use personal computers for their legal research and note-keeping, the crackdown might lead to a bright future for some Washington lawyers. According to one attorney, Roslyn A. Mazer, "Many lawyers are frustrated gourmet ice cream salesmen, baseball executives or proctologists. The unavailability of the yellow legal pad will enable them to embark on fully satisfying careers."

UPCOMING MEETINGS

8th National Recycling Congress, "Recycling '89 and Beyond", will be held October 31 - November 3, 1989, in Charlotte, North Carolina. For more information, call (704) 554-1132.

2nd Annual Eastern Regional Solid Waste Symposium, "A Look at the 90s", will be held November 1-2, 1989 at the International Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland. For more information, call 1-800-456-4723.

National Household Hazardous Waste Conference, November 6-8, 1989 at the Holiday Inn in Orlando, Florida. For more information, contact Kay Hickman at the GRCD, (301) 460-3860.

Ash Utilization and Stabilization Conference (ASH-II), November 8-9, 1989 at the Stouffer Concourse Hotel in Arlington, VA near the Washington, DC airport. For more information, (703) 347-4500.

Biocycle Southeast Conference '89, "Successful Recycling for Solid Waste and Sludge", December 4-6, 1989 at the Bellevue Biltmore Hotel in Clearwater/Tampa, Florida. Additional information available at (215) 967-4135.

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